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Vineland.  
A Narrative Poem.

by

Mrs. Rebecca Graham (Ayers) Andrews.



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LOS ANGELES

# VINELAND

A NARRATIVE POEM

BY

BESSIE AYARS ANDREWS

VINELAND NEW JERSEY

1911



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## INTRODUCTORY.

Fifty years ago: Charles K. Landis, then a young man of twenty-eight, having had some experience in settling Hammonton, and desirous of establishing a new town on a much larger scale contracted with the owner, Richard D. Wood of Philadelphia, for a tract of 16,000 acres of wild land along the line of the recently opened Glassboro and Millville Railroad. It was at the junction of this railroad and Landis Avenue, that the Founder, on the Eighth of August 1861, began the settlement of Vineland.

Twenty-one years afterwards, when the wilderness had given place to a prosperous community with fertile farms and happy homes, Mr. Landis wrote an account of the beginning of this enterprise, an interesting story of his efforts, trials and final success, which, after his death in 1900, was published.

The writer of these verses has drawn upon this account for the facts relating to the early settlement, and has also traced the changes in South Jersey from its occupancy by the red men until the coming of Mr. Landis.

The poem was written to commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of Vineland, and was read by the author at the monthly meeting of the Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society, Wednesday, January, 11, 1911.





## V I N E L A N D .

When a wilderness or forest  
Covered this fair land,  
Oak and laurel fern and pine tree  
Grew in seeming sand,

Came a man with an ideal  
And a vision too,  
Of a town with happy homesteads  
Where the forest grew.

Saw he avenues and shade trees  
Where the oak held sway,  
Saw he church spires, schools and houses  
All along the way.

Changed from nature's wilds to farm lands  
Yeilding good returns,  
Where for ages stood the pine tree  
Laurel and the ferns.

T'was the same unbroken forest  
King Mahawksey owned;  
Heard and loved the solemn dirges  
As the pine tree moaned.

Lived he in his home Washalla  
By the deep blue sea,  
Saw and loved the crested billow  
Same as forest tree.

## V I N E L A N D .

Here he lived in peace and plenty  
Close to nature's heart,  
With his chiefs and tribal people  
Of himself a part.

Yearly he with bow and arrow  
Left the salt sea air,  
Travelled northward to the mountains  
Of the Delaware.

Marked a trail right through the forest,  
Chief Newsego led,  
Captured bear and flying reindeer  
With their stealthy tread.

This same trail the northern Indians  
Travelled to the shore,  
To procure good fish and oysters  
For their winter's store.

Once a year this tribal people  
Gathered in conclave,  
Men of medicine and wisdom  
Warriors and brave.

Many timely feasts observed they  
Under heaven's dome,  
Some of them were sacrificial  
Some a "Harvest Home."

Here they slept and dreamed and hunted,  
In God's temples grand;  
Dried their clams and other sea fish  
On the river strand.

V I N E L A N D .

Loved the north wind, loved the south wind  
Feared the lightnings flash;  
Heard the voice of the Great Spirit  
In the thunder crash.

Soon the clouds began to gather—  
None like them before—  
First there came the cedar hunter,  
Then whale men to the shore.

Sad their mein this tribal people  
By aggressions made;  
Theirs the forest and the waters,  
Theirs the open glade.

Then a final counsel held they  
Lasting many days,  
Seeking aid of the Great Spirit  
In their troubled ways.

Near where counsel fire was burning  
Sat the old and wise,  
Chief Newsego rose among them:  
Grave with tearful eyes,

Pointing to the trail he told them  
Marked so plain and free  
From the hills will bring the pale face  
Onward to the sea

Well he knew no sacrifices,  
Canticle nor dance,  
Wampum belts nor loudest warwhoops  
Would stay his advance.

V I N E L A N D .

Brothers we will travel westward  
E'er our race is run;  
There we'll find a place of resting,  
Near the setting sun.

O'er the hills the tribes soon scattered,  
From the pale face fled;  
Left the forest, left Washalla  
By Newsego led.

Then there came the old Swede settler  
With his fishing smack—  
Came where dwelt the Sewaposes  
On the Whatquenack.

Built his church along the river—  
Maurice is the same—  
Sunken ship within its waters,  
Lives in river's name.

Others say from old Prince Maurice  
River owes its name,  
Prince of Orange, Count of Nassau  
Gen'ral of much fame.

Dutch and Swedes and Europeans  
Sought the red man's land,  
First known purchase from the Indians  
Was at Cape May strand.

Soon the English took possession  
Of the middle zone;  
By discoveries of the Cabots  
Claimed it as their own.

V I N E L A N D .

Time passed on, the English "Griffin"  
Sailed the Delaware,  
Bringing Fenwick to his purchase,  
His divided share.

Fenwick's tenth embraced our county—  
Cumberland we say—  
It was settled near the waters  
At an early day.

But this side of Maurice river  
Forest ancient stood;  
Here and there a charcoal burner  
Living in the wood.

When the founder of this borough  
Chanced to go this way,  
Saw this wilderness or forest  
Waiting for his day.

'Then he told his dearest mother  
Of his hopes and plan,  
How he'd change the old old forest,  
Into homes for man.

Told her of the genial climate,  
Healthful balmy air,  
Short the snowy reign of winter,  
Sunny skies are there.

Water pure as wells of Elim  
Where the palm trees stood,  
Can be found beneath the surface  
Sparkling clear and good.

## V I N E L A N D .

If I carry out my purpose  
Homes will soon appear;  
On each plot a habitation  
Built within a year.

Homes with green sward all about them  
Shrubbery and shade;  
Garden beds with flowers of beauty  
Also will be made.

Fertile farms of fruit and berry,  
Where stand forest tree,  
Will surround the business centre  
In my colony.

Said he, that he knew for fruit trees  
Finest soil is found,  
In the oak lands of New Jersey  
T'is productive ground.

Orchards, vineyards, miles of hedges,  
Avenues so wide;  
With a double row of shade trees  
Growing on each side.

Art and nature mingling ever  
Beautiful t'will be;  
Vineland is the name I've chosen  
For my vine country.

Free from taverns, I will make it—  
This my model town—  
Naught to tempt the coming settler  
Or to break men down.

V I N E L A N D .

This stupendous undertaking,  
Clearing of this tract,  
Must be done by men of vigor,  
Sober men in fact,—

For I never knew a pauper  
Made of sober men;  
They are ever always breeding  
In a liquor den.

Then I know how very sadly  
Liquor interferes,  
With the home and in the family  
Only bringeth tears,

Happy homes and homes of beauty,  
I desire to see,  
Whether mansion or a cottage,  
Built by industry.

Thus he spake and thus he reasoned  
From his very soul,  
With his vision and ideal  
Leading to the goal.

Then his mother with devotion  
Listening to her son,  
Knew his plans would be accomplished  
Thought of Hammonton.

Then she gave him of her savings  
All she had in gold,  
Cheerfully, without a question  
None did she withhold.

## V I N E L A N D .

Then he called in Penn's fair city  
On the o'wner there;  
Bargained with him for his wild land  
Prices must be fair.

Pleased but cautious was the owner  
At this wondrous scheme,  
Changing his old Jersey forest—  
Was it all a dream?

Then his wife she listened closely,  
As she heard him say,  
"Avenues for miles and broad ones  
Shade trees all the way."

She then caution gave her husband,  
It is all in vain,  
"Richard thee had best be careful  
I think he's insane."

Noway daunted still he sought him,  
Visits made each day;  
Wood suggested a beginning,  
Landis said "Ah nay,"

"Written must be my agreement  
We must contract sign,  
E're I start to build my city  
Or a road outline."

Eager they consulted counsel  
But no gain thereby,  
Until Wood said "Mr. Landis  
Surely, we must try,"



V I N E L A N D .

“You write out such an agreement  
Suited to your mind,  
Bring to me and I'll peruse it  
Next day t'will be signed.”

Satisfactory he found it  
Changing just one word;  
Substituted wood for timber  
Which he much preferred.

Thus was signed his own agreement,  
The transaction done—  
Just as war clouds dark were threatening  
Eighteen sixty-one.

There he stood his plan perfected  
E're the work began,  
As a sculptor in the marble  
Sees his chiseled man.

The first tree cut in the forest  
Fell by his own hand;  
Then the woodman's axe resounded  
Up and down the land.

The same year the eighth of August  
Driven was first stake,  
It was done to mark the centre  
For a start to make.

Trials had he sharp and bitter  
As the work progressed,  
Sometimes troubled, sometimes weary,  
As he oft confessed.

## V I N E L A N D .

Millville people called him crazy,  
Where he found supplies;  
But he told them "you'll be gainers  
By this enterprise—

"From these fertile farms and vineyards  
In ten years or more,  
Will be apples, grapes and peaches  
Offered at your door."

Then from far famed old New England  
Came a settler here,  
Cleared his land and built a homestead  
In the forest drear.

Others came and bought them small farms  
As the founder planned;  
Labored hard, and toiled and struggled  
To redeem the land.

Vineland then had its beginning,  
And in "sixty-four"  
Settlers came in larger numbers  
Than the years before.

Yankees came with all their notions,  
Willing workers too,  
Built their churches, schools and houses  
On the avenue.

Vineland's name became quite famous  
As a health resort,  
And it seemed that every nation  
Heard the glad report.

## V I N E L A N D .

For the place grew just like magic  
Many taking farms,  
Came for health and came for climate  
Came for Vineland's charms.

Came the weary worn out clergy,  
Tired professor too,  
Men of intellect and culture  
Seeking health anew.

Came the tempted for a refuge,  
For no flaunting sign  
Of saloon or licensed places  
Stand with bold design.

Time has made most wondrous changes  
Since the place began,  
Opened travel, linked the cities  
For the need of man.

And to day the light of Vineland  
Like a beacon stands,  
With a bright and steady gleaming  
Over Jersey lands.

And to day we thank the Founder  
For his vision clear;  
For his noble high ideal  
That he planted here.

And to day we tell the stranger,  
Truthfully t'is so;  
Standing was the old old forest  
Fifty years ago.





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